

Unesco: IGF 2018 delivers key messages to address Internet governance challenges

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The thirteenth edition of the Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) took place at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 12 to 14 November 2018. This multi-stakeholder event, held under the guidance of the United Nations (UN), where states represented by their governments gather together with intergovernmental organisations, civil society and the private sector (hi-tech industry, press and media, among others) as well as with scholars and academics, aims at facilitating discussions about Internet governance.

This year's edition was marked by the governments' willingness to engage in the process of governance, as the IGF was called to play a more significant role with regard to regulation and policy making. While reaffirming the need to keep the Internet as a neutral, open and non-centralised space, the IGF stressed the need to secure it in order to protect and safeguard democracies, societies and economies, in the wake of the past two eventful years.

Like the previous 2017 edition held in Geneva, the IGF 2018 delivered a set of messages summarising the main highlights and outcomes of its 2 sessions, which are "The new challenges of the Internet governance" and "Strengthening the Internet governance and the IGF". The key messages were as follows:

- The need to foster trust in digital innovation, while taking into account the rising concerns regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) and algorithms, in terms of ethics, transparency and accountability, as to the use and processing of personal data, among other things.
- Regulation alone is not enough to tackle the risks of information disorders (that is to say, misinformation, mal information and disinformation). Preserving media independence and developing and promoting education and media literacy are equally as important.
- Increasing the level of digital security by involving all concerned stakeholders and taking into consideration the importance of striking a balance between privacy and security are central to an effective protection of individuals online.
- Adopting a multi-stakeholder approach shall be inclusive by engaging with developing countries and SMEs, as they also have an impact on a largely

globalised cyberspace.

- ICT offer considerable opportunities but also raise multiple challenges in terms of employment and competition in the different markets. Also, regulation should care for both businesses and individuals as employees and customers, as they are all integral parts of the digital economy.

- Protecting fundamental human rights online is more vital than ever, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable groups such as children, women, refugees, persons with disabilities and sexual minorities. There is a need to promote greater gender equality and equal opportunities by addressing structural barriers.

- Adapting to the latest innovations and trends by implementing technical standards is a key to better security, interoperability and accountability, and hence better governance.

- Using AI to ensure inclusion and accessibility is a top priority, notably by raising awareness among developers and by actively mobilising citizens and communities.

Information and communication technologies (ICT), including the Internet, are high on the UN's 2030 Agenda, which aspires to advance its Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by all UN members states in 2015.

The fourteenth IGF will be hosted by Germany; it will be held in Berlin from 25 to 29 November 2019.

IGF 2018, Paris messages for the IGF 2018

<http://igf2018.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/WIP-Paris-Messages-.pdf>

